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THE

AGE OF GENIUS!

A

SATIRE ON THE TIMES.

IN A

POETICAL EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

BY THOMAS BUSBY.

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P R E F A C E.

I Am not unaware that some of the sentiments in the following Pages will prove discordant to prevailing opinions; but as every author does, or is *supposed* to, deliver his *own thoughts*, these are presented under *that* title. If the Poem possesses merit, that merit will be it's *own index* with *real* judges, and survive all the attacks of false criticism: if, on the contrary, it should be found destitute, instead of transmitting it's author's name to *posterity*, it will as certainly sink into *oblivion*; a circumstance which every *unsuccessful* writer, not as void of understanding as of literary talents, will deem the *more tolerable fate*.

THE
AGE OF GENIUS!
AN
EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

YOU, my dear friend, whom art and talents grace,
Which only to your *principles* yield place;
Who by your own know genius' real flame,
And, in your *own*, enjoy a well-earn'd fame;
You, lift'ning to my *temporary* song, 5
Shall judge, and tell me if I'm *right* or *wrong*.

WHEN our grave grandfires talk of those *rare times*,
Ere *modern* follies sprung, or *modern* crimes;

. B

When

When all were *chastely* honest, *greatly* good ;
 Untempted, or temptation still withstood ; 10
 When patriotism in *patriots* found support,
 And Virtue at St. James's kept her *court* ;
 When nought but for the *public good* was done ;
 Ere kings believ'd the *many* made for *one* ;
 When viewing in their King the common weal, 15
 The *many* felt for *one* a loyal zeal ;
 When ev'ry heart beat *Amor Patriæ*,
 And Britain's *strength* was Britain's *liberty* ;
 Ere *lower* ranks were mingled with the *higher*,
 Or trade to dissipation *dar'd* aspire ; 20
 Ere linsey-woolsey gowns were thrown aside,
 To deck, in lace and lustering, *female pride* ;
 Ere *old* men wore their *hair*, when *young* ones *wigs* ;
 Ere *cits* kept country boxes, and their *gigs* ;
 When lords and ladies honour'd their degree, 25
 All *things* and *men*, what *men* and *things* should be :
 When you hear *this*; when also you reflect,
All times, in turn, partake the same respect ;
That

That just like living poets, *present days*,
 Whate'er their *merit*, know no *present praise*; 30
 That, past and gone, like works of authors dead,
 Times are extoll'd whose *worthies* wanted *bread*:
 When you reflect on *this*, tho' *grief'd* the while,
 The *folly* cannot chuse but make you *smile*!

BUT yet, again, (distinction's line to draw) 35
 Tho' *dotage* thus to preach, we know no law
 Binds us to think *past* times *few* virtues had,
 Or, *having* few, that *these* are not as *bad*.
Some faults, *some* foibles, certainly *we* have;
Some fools, *some* coxcombs—*here* and *there*, a knave. 40
 Some *few* erroneous notions *now* prevail:
These let us weigh, my friend, in Reason's scale.

THE times *have* been when *genius* was so *rare*,
 The learn'd would *rev'rence*, and the ign'rant *flare*,
 If beaming from above the blessing fell, 45
 And bade some fav'rite happily excel:

The

The man with virtue and true genius fir'd,
 Was prais'd by all, and by the wife admir'd ;
 Beholding in the gift it's SACRED SOURCE,
 All honour'd, cherish'd, and confess'd it's force : 50
 From heav'n alone it came, and came to few,
 Nor from the sterl' root of labour grew.
 Of genius now (blest age !) the diff'rent lot !
 All think they have it—say, who has it not ?
 In courts it shines, in *sweats*, and the *schools*, 55
 And clears the world of *dances* and of *feasts* !
 Spreads, flourishes, and favours unconfin'd ;
 One common benefit to *all* mankind !
 In *this* opinion young and *old* abide,
 What genius is, is all they can't decide. 60
 Some, at the most, a *knack* conceive it all ;
 Or well to write, or well to *catch a ball*,
 An *equal* object of their *admiration*,
 As *fire* a title to their *approbation* :
 These undertake to prove it only *toil*, 65
 Denying all *deserving* of *soil* ;

Nature, with *them*, has no distinction made,
 And fruit *must* follow Application's spade:
 While others, (and by much the *greater part*)
 Tho' they allow it not *depends* on art,
 By labour *still* aver it may be gain'd ;
 Or something *very similar* attain'd.

Hence, of *all* maxims, which more trite than *this*—

‘ Study the more, if Nature is remiss ?’
 Guided by *this*, the million's led away ;
 Guided by *this*, hear what the million say !—

70

75

80

‘ ART thou not blest with Genius *labour free* ?
 ‘ By *labour* then, at least, a Genius be ;
 ‘ *Practice makes perfect*—Nature *still* is kind,
 ‘ If to her offers we're not *idly* blind.
 ‘ Nature is *coy* but to be fu'd with *Art* ;
 ‘ Then be it *thine* to act the suitor's part.
 ‘ Still as she *frowns*, more ardent court her *smile*,
 ‘ And seek her *favours* at the hand of *Toil*.

- ‘ Has the with sparing hand supplied thy *cup*? 85
‘ Pour in from *Learning’s*, then, and *fill it up*:
‘ The more thou add’st to what was giv’n before,
‘ Be sure in future, she will give the more ;
‘ In shape of *Genius* will her blessings show’r ;
‘ Shew what in *her’s* and what in *Learning’s* pow’r ; 90
‘ Prove that to Knowledge Wit is still allied,
‘ That *Labour’s* suit is never *long* denied,
‘ That learning *all* deficiencies supplies,
‘ And teaches e’en the *weakest* to be *wise*.
‘ Then *labour*—thus thou *full* amends shalt make 95
‘ For *natural* defects.’ O gross mistake!
From toil, I grant, some aid we may expect,
But ne’er shall conquer *natural* defect.
Strive as we *may*, endeavour all we *can*
To counter-aet, and vary *Nature’s* plan, 100
Still, spite of *all*, she keeps her *sov’reign* way,
Nor yields to *Art* the honour of her *sway*.
Nature to Art gave *birth*—and say, shall *she*
The *slave* commence of whom she caus’d to *be*?

'Gainst

'Gainst her *own wisdom* shall she prove a *tool*,

105

And mar her *purpose* to indulge a *fool*?

The bulk of Life's affairs ask no *great parts*,

And *little* or of *sciences* or *arts*:

Labour, mere *labour*, is the grand demand;

Some things the *head* must do, but more the *hand*.

110

The *bumblest* tenement Content enjoys,

In *raising*, many labourers employs;

While *amplest* piles Ambition can erect,

Ask in *designing* but *one* architect.

'CAUSE most are shallow, say we *Nature* fails?

120

Her *wisdom*, rather say, as *much* prevails

Where her stream oozes thro' the *narrowest souls*,

As where in *fullest tides* her bounty rolls.

'Tis not she *sinks*, because she lifts not *all*;

She *seems* indeed, but *only* seems, to fall:

125

To *one*, *great* end diversifies creation,

Supports and governs by *subordination*;

Here

Here high, there low ; now calm, and now a storm ;
 Various in *means*, in *purpose* uniform :
 Each rule of Nature's an *unerring* rule ; 130
 And when she *makes*, she always *means* a fool.

WHAT if each age ten thousand *Pitts* produce,
 And gives no *R——s* for common use ?
 Some *two* or *three* can chaunt the Cockpit note,
 But Government *three hundred* wants to vote : 135
 What's a whole Cabinet, tho' e'er so *wise*,
 Devoid of *P——s* for *timely* *lycs* ?

IN this great town, (region of *worldly* cares !),
 What *thousands* thrive by only vending wares !
 While *many* a son of Genius, and of Science, 140
 In *richest* merit finds a *poor* reliance !
 See *thro'* the world the observation hold---
 The way of *dulness* is the way of *gold*.
 The reason's plain—all—craftsmen, 'squires, and kings—
 Need more of *common* than *ingenious* things. 145

A poem

A poem, song, or picture, *now and then*,
 May strike the *fancied taste* of *dullest* men:
 But *vulgar lux'ries* come in *constant play* ; /
Dress and good-living triumph ev'ry day.

SINCE then, of life's conveniences, the *sum*
 Must from *mere industry*, not *Genius*, come,
 Dame Nature, in her *wisdom*, has thought fit,
 To give to most a *plenteous lack of wit* ;
 To stint them to their necessary light,
 Keep to it's *proper bound* their *mental fight*,
 That, only seeing their own *narrow course*,
 (As blinkers help to guide the packer's horse)
 They may not to *eccentric objects* stray,
 But keep the *beaten tenor* of their way.

DID Genius fall the lot of *ev'ry one*,
 How wou'd the bus'ness of the world be done ?
 If *all* were wits, who'd wreath the poet's bays ?
Originals, who surbish up *old plays* ?

What H——ts pillage for us *Gallic scenes* ?

And what become of all our *Magazines* ?

165.

All *first-rate artists*, who'd supply the town

With *striking likenesses* at *Half-a-crown* ?

Our dramatists, all Sheridans and Colmans,

Our players, Kings and Kembles, Popes and Holmans ;

Who shou'd enrich the stage with *Fontainbleaus* ?

170

What D——s speak so well with *half a nose* ?

Or if, in *music*, Genius favour'd all,

Who set the *yearly jingle* of Vauxhall ?

To hotch-potch *poetry*, give *airs hotch-potch*,

Coin *English jargon*, and baptize it *Scotch* ?

175.

New set this month, it's fond composer's pride ;

By the cloy'd public, *next month, set aside*.

All Stanleys, Arnolds, Battishills, and Cooks,

What shou'd we do for H—ns, and for H—ks ?

Could all *compose*, what D—ys shou'd *compile* ?

180

What D—es do *great things*, in a *little style* ;

Display their *tiny parts* in *alterations*,

New set old tunes, and spin out *variations* ?

All

All parsons, *learned bishops*, who wou'd preach?

All *qualified*, who *condescend* to teach? 185

If all *great lawyers*, lifted to the bar,

What *lesser rogues* shou'd bid their neighbours jar?

Into their minds the *legal frenzy* pour;

Or, found fomented, still foment the more?

All at the top, the top who shall support? 190

Who drive the sheep up to the *fleecing court*?

If all *physicians*, who's to *mix* the drug?

What the grave face, *wise wig*, well-practis'd shrug,

If still no *'pothecary* adds *his* part,

T'enforce the *recipe*, and reach the *heart*? 195

Say, what the use of *surest precepts* giv'n,

If still in *vain* the patient sighs—for *heav'n*?

EACH has his *part* in what his talents *suit*;

This shou'd *design*, and *that* but *execute*:

This sort the seed, by *those* the earth be till'd; 200

That give the plan, and *these* the structure build.

EACH of one chain is but a *diff'rent link*,
 Whether his task to execute, or *think* :
 Each in his office bears some *useful part* ;
 And *toil's* as indispensable as *art*. 205

Pity all see not Nature's *plain design* ;
 Not keep their station in the *mental line* :
 By leſſ'ning links the varying chain is bound,
 In *mazy turnings* winds and winds around ;
 Hence, *meeting*, leaſt with greatest *will* compare, 210
 Nor know how *many circles off* they are.
 By force of application *all* will draw
 Blessings from Nature against Nature's *law* ;
 Still *toil* and *teaze*, as, by downright assault,
 They'd *make her mend*, by *punishing* her fault : 215
 But *thus attack'd*, she *fortifies* her rules,
 And fools, *still plodding*, grow the *duller* fools.

E'EN Pope, who *modestly* imputes to *care*,
 The *charms* that in his verse shine *ev'ry where*,

Proves

Proves, in his very *compliment* to toil,
Such flow'rs cou'd only spring in such a soil.

220

O HAPPY Bard! Ah, how much *happier yet*,
Had but *due shades* oppos'd the *lights* of wit!
Hadst thou for *thine* the plan of *Nature* chose,
And shewn the *nettle* to commend the *rose*!
Just giv'n the *sample* to the *rule* you drew,
And been contented not to *over-do*!

225

WHY by redundant toil are *plain things* forc'd,
And from their *own simplicity* divorc'd?
Whether the subject, reptiles, gods, or men,
Why *all things* blazon where you turn your pen?
To the *first lustre* see *all parts* aspire,
And own e'en *beauty, unrelev'd*, may tire.

230

THINK a whole year beams out *one scene of flow'rs*,
Warm suns, soft airs, and amaranthine bow'rs;

235

And say, if flow'rs, if funshine, and soft airs,
 And *all* the charms the *loveliest season* wears,
 Can yield the transport of *returning spring*,
 Shaking *new* fragrance from *fresh-scented* wing,
 When Earth, reliev'd from storms and freezing skies, 240
 Feels from her womb a *new creation* rise ;
 When Summer follows with *maturing* sun,
 And takes of Spring the *task* she had *begun* ;
 When Autumn's pencil, *varying* still the scene,
 Ripens the fruit, re-paints the *changing green* ; 245
 When Winter, with a *rougher*, *bolder* hand,
 Heaves the swell'd flood, or *whitens* o'er the land :
 When *these* in Nature's *sapient* order roll ;
 Oppos'd, tho' *join'd*; tho' *sev'ral*, *one great whole* !
 Strike the *charm'd* eye, and teach th' *enraptur'd* heart, 250
 To feel what *circling seasons* can impart !

GREAT DRYDEN view ! see Art not *rule*, but *aid* ;
 The *objects* Nature's, Art's the *light and shade* :

See

See them in *due subordination* join ;

As that *strikes out*, this *perfect* the design.

255

Still as each thought supplies the *various rhyme*,

Th' *according stile* it's nature suits, and clime.

If it demand a *bright* and *burning sun*,

Their blazing course the *vivid numbers* run :

Would this but *dazzle*? Should less force inspire ?

260

Less glowing language sheds it milder fire :

Would it in cooler shade *more grace* receive ?

A soft recess the *faint expressions* give :

Does it, *quite plain*, a *lowly station* ask ?

The *homely line* performs it's *humble task* :

265

Would it more nat'r'al in the *medium flow* ?

The verse *accommodates*; nor *high*, nor *low* :

While, *noble!* it in *higher sphere* wou'd shine,

He elevates it in a *stile divine* !

See *Nature's pencil*, in the hand of *Art*,

Nature's own spirit to the work impart,

And the *bold figures*, *living!* from the canvas *start*!

270

See

See Learning's *body* kindled all to *soul*!

See the bright flame of *Genius* wrap the *whole*!

And say, had *Nature* this *great soul* denied,

275

If *Toil* the *inspiration* had supplied?

Most minds, by Nature *bound* to *such a line*,

Only within *that sphere* can ever shine:

Nay, even *there*, peep out in rays *so small*,

We cannot, *fairly*, say they shine at all.

280

Some, like the *Sun*, *whole worlds* are form'd to light;

Shine *ev'ry where*, and *ev'ry where* are *bright*:

Others, if o'er their *boundaries* they *rove*,

Sink, and extinguishing, *mere meteors* prove.

For a short space *some* roll their *transient fire*,

285

Just kindle to a *flash*, and then—*expire*!

Some a *long course* in Nature's *medium* shine,

Nor yet to *deaden*, nor to *blaze*, incline.

These, *independent*, in *themselves* are bright;

Those form'd but to reflect *another's light*:

290

Some,

Some, like fierce comets, *rapid* move, and *far* ;
 Like them, again, returning *regular* ;
 Relume their fire at *Relaxation's* sun,
 And then again as *wide a circuit* run,

WHEN we a spark wou'd rouze to *active flame*, 295
 We only need to *fan* and *feed* the same :

Once rais'd, the more we heap the kindling pyre,
 Sparks *thicker* rise, and *fiercer* flames aspire ;
 Catch at each part, their growing vigour raise,
 And spread, and burst into an *universal blaze* ! 300
 Not so the *mind*—A *spark* found only *there*,
 We *less* must heap, and with a *nicer* care :
 The *mental* spark but such a pile will light,
 Bear but *such chafing*, and but burn *so bright*.

The fuel *duly measur'd* to it's pow'r, 305
 If *faintly glimm'ring*, may exist it's *hour* ;
 Illumine all it's *little pyre* around,
 And, by it's *own*, shew *kindred sparks* their bound.

But if, *ambitious*, it wou'd *spread*, (Behold !
 Behold the fate of *little sparks* too bold !) 310
Stifled by what it *vainly* strives to light,
 It's rashness brings it's own *eternal night*.

Good Doctor Dormant, whom in youth we knew,
 Had some *small spirit*, some *small Genius* too ;
 And with *proportion'd learning* promis'd fair, 315
 To do *some credit* to the past'ral care :
 Nay, pow'r beyond *most parsons* might have reach'd,
 And kept *awake* his audience while he *preach'd* ;
 Or, (greater latitude of praise to take)
 Had preach'd as tho' he were *himself awake* : 320
 But, lo ! with crudition *overcharg'd*,
 And nothing but his *waiſt* and *wig* enlarg'd,
 With *letter'd lumber*, heap'd and heap'd about,
 Self-knowledge *quench'd*, knowledge of men *ſbut out* :
 Nay, *Learning's self*, press'd down by it's own weight 325
 Too close to kindle, or irradiate,

The

The spark that in *due time* had *somewhat shone*,
 Instead of *brighter*, quite *obscure* is grown ;
 And for some judgment, spirit, and ideas,
 Only a huge, *dead stock* of words appears.

330

AND now I hear some *pedants* say—‘ What, then,
 ‘ Is *Genius* all that’s to distinguish men ?
 ‘ Shall Wit o’er *Learning* dare to mount his seat ?
 ‘ *Illit’rate Wit* the sacred *Sisters* greet ?’
 No—Genius e’er so *great*, I still confess,
 Can never know, *alone*, it’s happiness :
 As flames unfed, must transiently expire,
 So without *learning* must the *mental fire* :
 Nay, as more bright, more general the flame,
 More fuel must supply and feed the same ;
 E’en so the *mind* the *wider* it expands,
More knowledge for it’s *maintenance* demands.

335

340

GENIUS and Learning, in *each other* blest,
 In him a *manly* strength, in her confess’d
 That

That pliant *Modesty* which heightens beauty, 345
 And adds to charms of *frame*, the grace of *duty* ;
 Which points, yet *delicately* points, the way ;
 So rules, by *yielding* she preserves her sway ;
 While Genius triumphs with a *gen'rous* pride,
 And, while he's *guided*, seems to *lead* his guide— 350
 Learning with Wit, thus *happily* combin'd,
 Will, *must*, yield models of the *nobleſt* kind ;
 The parents by their *progeny* be known ;
 Their *blended* qualities *exalted* shewn :
 Learning by *Wit* inspir'd, to *Wit* gives *aid*, 355
 While Wisdom, *smiling*, owns the league she made.

WHERE is the man who learning wou'd *explode* ?
We only reason 'gainſt the *gen'ral mode* ;
 The dealing it to *geniuses* and *fools*,
 By *equal portions*, and *unvaried rules*. 360

It's *present* influence, let us then survey ;
 See who it *aids*, and who it *leads astray* ;

How

How oft but fills the gap of youthful years,
 And then for *trade*, or *pleasure*, disappears :
 Yet how more frequent holds up *human pride*,
 And *follies*, nature, *unprovok'd*, wou'd *bide*.

Among the sons of *Lit'rature*, how few
 Up to the *fountain-head* the stream pursue !

Or, to the fountain-head *pursuing*, yet
 How *fewer* taste the *sense*, or feel the *wit* !

How *many* with the *dregs* become unsound ?

(For where the spring so *clear* but dregs are found ?

Where dregs, my friend, *more* plenteous found than here,
 Tho' drawn by *you*, no spring is found so *clear*)

How *many*, with their *learning*, *error* drink,
 And make the brink of *knowledge*, *folly's* brink ;
 At *ev'ry draught* some wholesome thought *repress*,
 And only suck in *pride* and *idleness* !

SOME are to barbarism so *strong* inclin'd
 By *nature*, they can *never* be refin'd ;

365

370

375

380

Or arts, or letters, teach them *what you will*,

You only give to vice *new pow'rs and skill*:

Bound or to *frailty's*, or to *folly's* side,

Or *vice*, or *folly*, still their conduct guide;

While each accomplishment bestows the art,

385

Abler to play the *fop's* or *villain's* part.

With *some small parts*, but more of *vulgar pride*,

(The *common basis* of each fault beside)

They *not without success* to study bend,

(If *that's* success which serves not *Virtue's* end).

390

New vices, with each *new acquirement*, shew;

Or as in *knowledge*, so in *pertness* grow;

Bid *Confidence* break down each *decent fence*,

And *Learning* hold the torch to *Insolence*.

For *learning* heav'n cou'd never *these* design,

395

Since *worse* than vain, our efforts to *refine*.

Their *native*, gross deformity of soul,

(As *subterraneous vapours* *harmless* roll)

Beneath the veil of *ignorance* might lie

Unnotic'd, nor offend th' *escaping eye*.

400

But

But, meant by *erudition* to be grac'd,
 And in the light of *lit'rature misplac'd*,
 Each fault's not only brought to *public view*,
 But what *exposes magnifies* it too.

So when gross matter in the *earth* is pent,

405

Th' *exhaling* beams of Phœbus give it vent ;

Draw it from *darkness* to the *open day*,

(From where, *confin'd*, it *inoffensive lay*)

And as it issues from the teeming earth,

Not merely give the sulphur second birth,

410

But as it, fuming, hovers o'er the ground,

Spread it, by rarefaction, all around.

SOME boys, at *most*, seem *only* sent to school,
 To compliment the *universal rule* ;
Just thro' a *certain course* of study run,
Just to return to where they *first begun* :
 Acquire a *little* with a *deal of pain*,
 For bus'ness to *resign* it all again :

415

Just

Just as their *sisters*, in their *maiden lives*,
 Learn *music*—to forget it when they're *wives*.

420

BEHOLD them, tolerable scholars made,
 Throw by their *books* to make a way for *trade*:
 At *certain age*, see them of *course* begin
 To *let out* learning, to let commerce *in*:
 Till from *all* lit'rature's attractions wean'd,

425

And losing e'en the *little* they had glean'd,
 In spite of *all* their Greek, and all the *praise*
 Acquir'd by *misconstruing* Latin plays,
 They turn out just as wise, and just as bright,
 As those who've only learn'd to *read* and *write*.

430

AGAT the goldsmith, when he first left school,
 Could translate *Virgil*, and was *no small fool*:
 Nay, was so good a *Grecian*, that, 'tis said,
 Homer with *decent fluency* he read.
 But now with *other things* that *head* is fill'd,

435

Than who stole *Helen*, or who *Hector* kill'd;

The

The narrow cell but for one tenant made,
 Could not contain both *lit'rature* and *trade*.
 Trade's *skilful hand* soon therefore op'd a *door*
 For Learning's *quickly-disappearing* store ; 440
 Drew from his head what knowledge it might hold,
New furnish'd, and *trepann'd*, the skull with *gold*:
 Now *Traffic* holds the seat where *Learning* fate,
 And now a *diamond casket* is that *pate*:
 Where Homer shot but an *ideal* blaze, 445
 Now *real* brilliants dart *congenial* rays :
 Where gold in *golden verse* cou'd only *flow*,
 There *sterling gold* supplies it's *solid* glow :
 No more a place there *Greece* or *Troy* maintain,
 No longer *burden* his now *alter'd* brain ; 450
 If any *Troy*, *Troy-weight* now bears the *sway* ;
 And *Greece*, that *conquer'd* *Troy*, to *gold gives way*.

THESE a *small few* !—The greater, *wiser* part,
 Display their *talents* in a *bolder start* !

To brighter objects than dull commerce turn ; 455

For nobler wreaths than *Crœsus'* dare to burn !

Retain their learning, and, before, forget

Their *bus'ness*, lest the world forget their *wit* :

'Mongst Guildhall's patriots, or Coachmaker's smarts,

Unwind their *learning*, and display their *parts*. 460

No matter whether trade goes ill or well ;

Enough for them, that they in *prate* excel !

And, strange to say ! no few of modern failures

Originate at *Paul's*, or *Merchant-Taylor's*.

Cits, scholars now and rhetoricians grown, 465

Claim more than *ancient titles* for their own.

Once, all their care to be well soak'd and fed ;

The *belly fill'd*, still *empty* went the *head* :

Careless of praise at council each took part ;

Nor got, the day before, his speech by *heart*. 470

Cool, if not *rational*, he *spoke his say* ;

And *equal orators* bore *equal sway*.

No thirst of letter'd reputation yet
 Had e'en begot th' *idea* of *city-wit* ;
 No brawling knew they loud as at the bar ;
475
 No blows *uncivil* bred a *civil-war* :
 Each talk'd and *doz'd* in turn, and that was all ;
 No *pens* and *ink* yet flew about the *Hall* :
 No neighbour to despoil his neighbour fought,
 But all departed with the *wigs* they brought ;
480
 No heads surcharg'd in *raſh dispute* then mix'd,
 Like *Shrovetide cocks* on leaden basis fix'd ;
 In *weight of belly* each his ballast found,
 And, *light at top*, erectly kept his ground.

BUT this *no more!*—We must not now, alack !
485
 Seek the decorum of a cent'ry back :
 All *learned* now, and consequently *wits*,
 Fall *cureless* into strong-conceited fits ;
 For liberty, and *dear diurnal fame*,
 Rush to debate with more than patriot flame :
490

To

To Council call'd, so furiously engage,
They scarce at *table* shew a greater rage !

AT *Merchant-Taylor's* bred, Hardwareman cries—
 ‘ Shall we than men of *Paul's* be deem'd less wife ? ’
 Or, bred at *Paul's*—‘ Shall we in knowledge yield, 495
 ‘ And give to *Merchant-Taylor's* men the field ? —
 ‘ Here ! where's my gown, lamp, paper, ink, and pen ?
 ‘ Sleep is for *private*, not for *public*, men :
 ‘ To my *dear country* I'll this night devote,
 ‘ To-morrow's speech indite, and get by rote.’ 500
 By his wife question'd why he keeps from bed—
 ‘ *England's salvation*, child, is in my head !
 ‘ How we may rise, her *Genius* whispers still ;
 ‘ But *all* depends upon my care and skill : }
 ‘ *Britannia calls !* and I must do her will.’ } 505
 So when poor Crispin, crazy for the praise
 Of *pulpit* eloquence, to preach essays ;
 His *'prentice* clerk ; his *cobling-stool* his stage ;
 Flies to the fields with *tabernacle rage* !

With Rowland's skill crests the orbs of fight, 510
 Or turns them, *ravish'd!* on the *inward light!*
 Forgets Will's shoulders are but flesh and bone,
 Or thinks at home he's *hammering* on his *stone* ;
 Now faith, *all-saving faith*, proclaims aloud !
 Now deals damnation on the trembling crowd ! 515
 Ask'd why for *preaching* he deserts his *fall*,
 (Bred at Moorfields, or Tot'nam) hear him bawl,
 ' Because as how I feels I has a *call* !'

}

SAY *moderns* what they will, we still shall find
 All knowledge but the *vesture* to the mind ; 520
 That, howe'er fine the *cloth*, or rich the *lace*,
 No *blockhead's wear* will ever give it *grace* :
 While Genius ! e'er so *coarsely* clad, still shews
 A *manner* ! and does *credit* to his *cloaths*.
 But as the mob no *nice* distinctions make, 525
 Exterior *glare* for *Quality* mistake,
 While *Quality herself*, in plain array,
 Passes *unnotic'd* thro' the public way ;

Since only *Taste* can ever draw the line,
 'Tween where the *trappings*, where the *manners* shine ; 530
 Where from *within*, no rays the *Graces* shoot,
 Where *Elegance* but asks a *better suit*,
 So few discern th' *insuperable* fence,
 'Tween *only ignorance* and—*want of sense*.
 Who're deeply *learned*, *must* be deeply *wise*, 535
 Wisdom in *theory*, not *prætice*, lies :
 Who *know* the right, are *wise*, e'en in the *wrong* ;
 Tho' weak their *conduct*, still their *judgment* strong.
 Who *little* know ; that *little* e'er so well
Employ'd, each *o'er-charg'd* blockhead shall excel 540
 His boldest, *happiest* effort : and by shewing
 The diff'rence between *doing* and but *knowing*,
 Secure the plaudits due to *native merit*,
 And *seize* the palm which *Genius* shou'd inherit.

SOME we *both* know, who, train'd in Folly's walk, 545
 Blunder thro' life, and while they're *flumbling*, talk

Of *rectitude*; and place all *human reason*
 In words so *join'd*, things done in *such a season*;
 In knowing right from wrong, tho' all their life
 Is with that knowledge *one continual strife*: 550
 Their *doctrines* tell how easy 'tis to *preach*,
 Their *lives* how hard to *practise* what they *teach*.

‘ Who know the right, can *do* the right at *will* ;
 ‘ *Knowledge* the pow'r, the virtue and the skill.
 ‘ Who can *return*, have *privilege* to *stray* ; 555
 ‘ Nor do they *err* who *know* the better way.
 ‘ To *know's* the sense—they're *wise* who wisdom *see*—
 ‘ To *know* what's right, is in the right to *be* !’

AND is it then enough we wisdom *view* ?
 Is to *distinguish* all we have to do ? 560
 Will merely *separating* wrong from right,
 Teach to *restrain* from that, in this *delight* ?
 Is it enough we *hear* but Reason's voice ?
 No judgment necessary to *direct* our *choice* ?

No grace, no *sense*, no *talents* wanting still,
To *do*, as well as *underſtand* her will ?
Merely the good and ill to *justly paint*,
Distinguishes the *preacher*, not the *saint* :
To know *true* wit from *false*, and *only* know it,
May form the *critic*, but ne'er made a *poet*.
565
570

WHEN to *confirm* his *virtue* and his *knowledge*,
His *unſpoil'd* ſon Sir Tradewell ſent to *college*,
And found, at his *return*, his *education*
But *pedantry*, and *taste for diſipation*,
We could not *censors* of his *wit* commence,
'Twas only *ignorance*, not *want of ſense*.
The Knight, old-faſhion'd, bred in thoſe *plain days*,
When *luſt of pudding* banish'd *luſt of praise* ;
When *He* was master of the nobleſtfeat,
Who at a *turtle-feaſt* the moſt cou'd eat ;
When Dulneſs held at Guildhall *quiſt ſway*,
Or only rattled there on *Lord May'r's Day* ;
575
580

Ere honest, *fame-deluded* cits aspired
 To *rhet'ric*, and by *Woodfall's* praise were fir'd ;
 Ere Nonsense *perk'd* herself in *classic stays*, 585
 And broke the *lace* in *stretching* for the *bays* :
 The Knight, home-bred, and still without the *polish*
 By which *wise moderns* ancient *rust* abolish ;
 Untaught, untrain'd in *Erudition's* schools,
 Stranger to *colleges*, and *college-rules* ; 590
 Who scarce had heard of *science* or *degree*,
 And knew no rule—except the *Rule of Three*—
 Thinking at *Oxford* Wisdom reign'd *alone*,
 (For how should *he* know *Dulness* shar'd the throne ?)
 Sent his son there to seek her for his guide, 595
 And fail'd—but fail'd with *reason* on his side.

BUT when his *Lordship*, with more knowledge stor'd
 Than deem'd by *peers* becoming in a *lord* ;
 Knows what is *true nobility*—it's *end*—
Whence honours *sprung*—on what they *still depend*— 600

K That

That, Liberty and Virtue it's support,
No spot yields sweeter incense than a *court* ;
 That *once* uncherish'd by their *sun-like* rays,
None droop so sudden as the *titled* bays—

When my Lord, taught in *this*, knows well the right 605

From wrong, yet errs in *Education's* spite :

When *such a lord* instructs his rising heir,
 With *high-born* honours, *meanest* stains to wear ;
 To *boast* that height which but a *sound* supports,
Disdain a friendship where *mere merit* courts ; 610
 To bear in mind that he's a *Noble Lord* !

Born by untitled worth to be *ador'd*
 At *humble distance*—to avoid, not *greet*,
 Nor *see* her, shou'd he meet her in the *street* ;

But turn his back on her *plebeian* band— 615
Yet take a *villain gamester* by the *hand* ;
 Be 'bove th' approaches of the *saucy poor*,
 Unless first qualified—as *pimp*, or *whore*—
 Yet on occasion too, stoop *e'er so low*,
 If with the *lordly* view to *make them so*— 620

When

When thus my *lord* instructs his *heir* to run
 The course of *guilt*, ere *manhood's* is begun ;
 To drink, to rake, seduce, and throw the dice,
 With ev'ry *other* fashionable vice ;
 To make his claim to his *estate* more clear, 625
 To all his *follies* makes him too the heir ;
 Acts *wilfully* in Reason's *contradiction* ;
 Not only *errs*, but *errs* 'gainst *self-conviction* ;
 Nor claims the *want of knowledge* for defence—
 What is it—tell me—but the *want of sense*? 630

SURVEY the times, you'll find the *dullest elves*
 Have still the *best opinion* of themselves :
 Tho' void of understanding, as of *wit*,
 In *blessed self-conceit* they're happy *yet* ;
 That succedaneum *all* defects supplies ; 635
 With common sense and *that*, they all are *wise* :
 Nor *only wise*—Conceit provides them wit ;
 At council aids my *lord*, as well as *cit* :

By

By Cit, nor Lord, nor Parliament, nor Hall,

Monopolis'd—but still enjoy'd by *all*.

640

Ev'ry profession feels alike it's aid,

And *sons of rhet'ric* spring from *sons of trade*:

All *now* too bright for *Traffic's* occupations,

Rush from their *own*, and seize the *upper* stations:

By dint of *confidence*, or dint of *gold*,

645

Usurp the heights *Ability* should hold:

While Merit *once dethron'd*, they *keep her down*;

And, how'e'er ill it fits them, *wear the crown*.

Tho' long, *long* fled the time since *bold Pretence*

First with his *strong, invulnerable fence*,

650

Guarded *fond Inclination* 'gainst th' attack

Of *searching Diffidence*, (still free to rack

The brcast of Genius; to inflict those *pains*,

Reserv'd, alas! for all who're curst with brains;

Those *poignant* wounds which *scrup'lous* merit feels,

655

Which scarce the world's *just commendation* heals;)

Tho'

Tho' long, *long* gone the day since *Dulness* knew
 (If e'er she did) the *pangs* which still accrue
 From *self-critique*—yet never, *sure*, till now,
 Did Confidence such *ample field* allow

670

To Vanity—*Once* in his own *small way*
 To be the first, and bear *mechanic* sway,
 Compas'd the *craftsman's* wish ; nor did he strive
 By any but his *native* pow'rs, to thrive :

Now Emulation wild, and *past all bound*,

675

Soars to the *skies*, *disdainful* of the ground ;
 While all (for *foreign fame* outrageous grown)
 Would mount on *any* pinions but their *own*.

The Cooper scans the *planets*, knows their scope,
 Bends *pliant nature* as he bends a *hoop* ;

680

Gallantly gives to *Venus* *Saturn's* moons,
 And proves by *gravity* we raise balloons !

The Carpenter, turn'd architect, *designs* !

S——y harangues ; Dunces commence Divines !

Th' Apothecary makes *Castalian* doses !

685

And Madan turns Musician, and *composes* !

As some *peculiar* whim each coxcomb draws
 Aside, so diff'rent accidents the *cause* :
Unconscious, these at first are led astray ;
Those, of themselves ambitious, start away ! 690
 Some later catch this *fever* of conceit,
 Others in *infancy* imbibe it's *heat*.

WHAT *parent* but admires his children's *babble*,
 And sense and humour hears in *all* they *gabble*?
 Between papa and company hemm'd in, 695
 How Dicky's *wit* provokes the *circling* grin !
 And if 'mongst all the *rattle* of a day,
 One *random repartee* shou'd break it's way,
 Which the child neither *means* nor *understands*,
 What *laughing plaudits* ! and what *clap of bands* ! 700
 How oft the table bids the *joke* resound !
 The *standing bye-word* of a *whole year round* !

DOES he, in some mere, *wanton whimsey*, snatch
 The *pencil*, and around the wainscot *scratch*—

“ What

- What *rising genius* dawns in ev'ry stroke ! 705
• *A painter born !*—See here—see there!—Look, look!
• Let him go on, and 'gad ! 'tis all so well,
• No artist *living* but he shall *excel*.
• Shou'd he proceed, and take to *Humour's* school,
• To what he'll be, your *Rowlandson's* a fool ; 710
• Or if for *portraits*, soon shall *Romney* yield,
• And even *Gainsborough* give up the field :
• For *biftry*? Still shall he top the *best* ;
• To *Reynolds'* force join all the *truth* of *West* !

Or does he draw the bow across the kit,
And, *chance-directed*, some known passage hit,
Enough! ‘The boy has a *surprizing* ear!
‘Has he *not*, spouse?’—‘Indeed he *has*, my dear!
‘What may we not expect from *such a son*?—
‘At least a *Cramer*, or a *Salomon*!
‘A master he shall have, whate’er the *cost*;
‘A *downright sin* such *genius* shou’d be *lost*!

PERHAPS grown up, (his earlier years all spent
 In those vile tricks which speak a vicious bent
 In *nature*; and by which we all foresee 725
 By what the *boy* is, what the *man* will be;)
 Perhaps, tho' mean in *parts*, for trade *too proud*,
 (In *pride* as well as *cunning* 'bove the *crowd*)
 He bends to *study*; and, thro' want of time,
 But *now and then* repeats a former crime: 730
 (While at his heart vice *still* retains it's *root*,
 And but retires more *vigorous* to *shoot*,
 When *rip'ning years* shall all it's strength display
Full-grown, nor *shrinking* from the eye of day)
 Perhaps, (for Dulness is to *Toil* allied, 735
 As *Craft* to Dulness, or as *both to Pride*;) }
 Perhaps he labours, and as fierce a zeal
 For *virtue*, as for *learning*, seems to feel:
 Ne'er from his *books*, but, plodding *day and night*, }
 (As wond'rrous *good*, as he is wond'rrous *bright*) 740
 Makes his *dop'd* father think now all is right: }
 Who

Who, *simple man!* unknowing *Nature's rules*,

And how she *qualifies* her *choiceſt fools*;

Who not amongst the *brightest wits* himself,

Confounds with *wits* each *pert*, each *artful elf*;

Sees *wiſdom* in the *knav'e*, and *first-rate parts*,

Where *wiser men* see only *meanest arts*;

Finds Genius where but *Av'rice'* talons lurk,

By *Knav'ry* sharp'ned for *Dishonour's* work—

—*Knav'ry!* which wise men hate, the dull *adore*,

Comprizing all the *fool*, and something more:

Vile, abject *Knav'ry!* ever on the watch

For what by *meanest methods* he may catch;

Whom he may best *surprise*, whose wit *defeat*,

(For none so keen but whom a *knav'e* shall *cheat*)

Whose *bonied cell* he safely shall deprive

Of it's *best sweets*, and leave a *ruin'd hive*:

Whose *loosen'd nest* shall offer to repair,

And keep together with a *guardian care*;

Friend-like, restore the *feathers* that are *flown*,

While, *Lawyer-like*, he's *feathering his own*—

745

750

755

760

His father, worse than ign'rant here, nay even
 Deeming this Knav'ry *Genius*, thinking Heaven
 Has blesſ him with a son whose *sprightly pranks*
 Speak brilliant talents, and demand his *thanks*,
 For some great, due return, employs his *search*—
What?—Dick shall be a—*pillar of the Church.*

765

HENCE, and from other causes *not more wise*,
 The place of *Wisdom* many a knave supplies :
 Hence groan the arts beneath an *over-stock* ;
 Hence science feels the *weight* of many a *block* :
 Hence daily those are *taught* t'assume the *pallet*,
 Whose minds, *self-led*, had rose but to the *mallet*.

Hence by themselves, *some politicians* made,
 Whom wiser Nature only meant for *trade* :

Hence cowards by commissions rank with braves ;
 While *fools*, made *Lawyers*, think they rise to *Knaves* :
 Hence *authors*, with nor wit, nor sense, their *own* ;
Critics with brains of *lead*, and hearts of *stone* :

Hence

Hence Nature's *great decorum* is annoy'd,
Hence half her *wisdom*, in *effect*, destroy'd:
And, by admitting each *pretending fool*,
Arts, arms, religion, turn'd to *ridicule*!

780

O FRIEND! whose ear I have detain'd *too long*;

Whose judgment bids me *tremble* for my song!

785

You, at whose bar I have the Age arraign'd,

(And, tho' in *rhime*, yet *feelingly* complain'd)

Say, am I right? or is my subject feign'd?

Is *letter'd Dulness* still for *Dulness known*?

Is *Genius* rais'd to *Reputation's* throne?

790

Are *highest posts* to *wisest heads* assign'd,

The *low* to talents of an *humbler kind*?

Are *blockheads* in their *native walks* content?

Is *Merit* cherish'd by *Encouragement*?

Say *this*, obedient I each word *retract*,

795

Renounce my sentiments, and yield to *fact*.—

But if you think with *me*, with *me* confess,

Folly but *more* herself in *Wisdom's dress*;

'That

That *fool's* in *fewest* words find best *disguise*,
 And, *wife in silence*, may seem *really wife* ; 800
 But if, in spite of *Nature*, spite of *Fate*,
 They will be *busy*, and they will be *great* ;
 Will *dare* to heights *beyond* their stretch of thought,
 Will *preach* and *teach* what first they shou'd be *taught* ;
 If, lost to all the *little* sense they *have*, 805
 They will exhibit *more* than *Nature gave* ;
 Will, *rushing* from their *sphere*, to heights arise,
 By *Reason* held as *Sacred to the Wise* ;
 Then, joining *me*, convince the *erring elves*,
 The more they'd *raise*, the more they *sink* themselves ; 810
 Yes—tell each coxcomb—tell him to his face,
 'The fool's *best knowledge* is to know his *place* !

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